

In the Specification:

Please add the following paragraphs after Page 10, line 3, as follows:

FIG. 13 is a flowchart of a further method according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 14 is a flowchart of a yet further method according to an embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 15 is a flowchart illustrating a yet further method according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Please add the following paragraphs after Page 60, line 2, as follows:

Reference is now made to Fig. 13 which illustrates a method according to an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 13, a method for at least semi-automatically directly negotiating a relationship between at least a first user party and a second user party, involves user parties at respective computational devices connected over a network, the relationship relating to components. The method involves firstly electronically generating a first intention for the first user party at a first computation device and a second intention for the second user party at a second computational device, each of the intentions featuring various components and being in accordance with an intention data structure.

The method proceeds to electronically compare the two intentions. When the two intentions are different then a negotiation procedure is entered. The method electronically provides for one of the computational devices to define an additional component for the intention of the first user party.

A message including the additional component is sent to the second party.

It is electronically determined when the additional component is accepted by the second party.

When the additional component is accepted by the second party, then each party adds the additional component to the intentions.

The comparison is repeated, and when the two intentions match then the method electronically merges the two intentions to form a common user intention, and determines the relationship according to the common user intention. The common user intention is also in accordance with the intention data structure.

Reference is now made to Fig. 14 which is a simplified diagram illustrating a method according to a further embodiment of the present invention. A method is illustrated of creating a minimizing goal for a level within a goal program comprising a hierarchy of levels, for at least semi-automatically directly negotiating a relationship between at least a first user party and a second user party, the parties being at respective first and second electronic computers connected over a network.

The method comprises a stage 140 of providing electronically to the parties at the electronic computers over the network a goal program having multiple levels in a hierarchy, at least some of the levels including constraints. This is followed by 142 taking a level and then 144 electronically identifying constraints within a respective level. At box 146 the constraints identified are electronically normalized to render the identified constraints mutually comparable, so as to obtain normalized constraints at the electronic computers. Finally a stage 148 is carried out of electronically combining the normalized and thus mutually comparable constraints to create a minimized goal for the current level at the electronic computers. The result is a level within the hierarchy having a minimized goal and thus providing levelwise solution of the goal program.

Reference is now made to Fig. 15, which is a flow chart illustrating yet another embodiment of the present invention. In Fig. 15, a method is illustrated of at least semi-automatically directly negotiating a relationship between two or more user parties at respective computers connected over a network. The method comprises providing a first intention for the first user party and a second intention for the second user party being stored within an intention data structure, the intentions respectively featuring a plurality of components. A dispatch is then exchanged between the processor of the first user party and the processor of the second user party including a reference to a value for one of the components. Based on the referenced value the method then electronically generates a merged portion within the intention data structure. Then the method alters one of the intentions using the merged portion. Now following alteration the two intentions are compared. If the

intentions match then the relationship is determined according to the merged portion. Otherwise a further dispatch is exchanged.